

healthcare response. That includes \$10 billion for research and development of a vaccine through Operation Warp Speed, \$16 billion for personal protective equipment, \$26 billion for testing, and, of course, the \$173 billion Provider Relief Fund to help our hospitals.

More than 23,000 hospitals and healthcare providers in my State alone have received more than \$5.1 billion in Federal funding, allowing them to procure critical resources like masks and gloves and to cover mounting costs due to the deferral of elective procedures.

In August, I had a chance to personally thank some of the healthcare workers in Abilene, Waco, Wichita Falls, Amarillo, Lubbock, and Corpus Christi. I also had lunch and visited with the children of healthcare workers in the Rio Grande Valley who, even at such a young age, are amazed by the heroic work of their parents.

As our war against this virus carries on, we need to ensure that our frontline workers and healthcare providers have the resources they need to sustain this fight.

I also visited with the Family Health Center in Waco, which is 1 of 73 federally qualified health centers in Texas operating more than 500 sites. This is really a critical part of our healthcare safety net in my State and across the Nation.

I have always been a strong supporter of our community health centers and cofounded the Senate Community Health Centers Caucus several years ago. As I said, these facilities make quality healthcare a reality for so many Texans, whether they have Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, or no insurance. Texans can go to these health centers and receive the care they need when they need it.

The particular Family Health Center I visited in Waco was founded more than 50 years ago to address a shortage of doctors and primary care access for low-income patients and has since grown to 15 clinics across McLennan County, which provide not only primary and preventive care but dental and behavioral healthcare too.

As Family Health Center CEO, Dr. Jackson Griggs, said community-oriented primary care is difficult in any era, and it has been uniquely challenging during COVID-19. Unexpected operating costs and lost revenue created serious financial hardship, but because of the \$3 million in the CARES Act and other Federal funding they got, they have continued to provide quality healthcare during this time of critical need. Because of Federal funding, they have been able to test every person who comes in with symptoms. They received the equipment, the kits, the mobile computer systems, tents, and the air-conditioning units that allows staff to test patients outdoors, even during a hot Texas summer.

During our visit, Dr. Griggs told me they conducted more than 7,400 tests, with over 1,500 patients testing positive. Of those, 53 percent were unin-

sured. Without legislation passed by Congress, who knows what these patients would have been able to afford or even get access to a COVID-19 test. This funding has also provided more than 187,000 pieces of PPE to the Family Health Center's doctors, nurses, dentists, social workers, and staff who are trying to stay safe and healthy while they continue to care for their patients.

On top of that, the funds have provided the information technology infrastructure to get telehealth services started in record time and nearly 11,000 hours of paid leave for healthcare workers and other staff members who become ill or need to quarantine because of the virus.

The legislation we passed has also helped community health centers, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and healthcare facilities throughout the State continue to serve their communities.

As we keep working to deliver the assistance for the American people, we need to continue to support our healthcare response. This means ensuring that the providers continue to have the resources needed to operate throughout this crisis. It means more resources for testing and contact tracing to stop the spread. It means an even greater investment in the race to discover a vaccine and treatment so we can finally bring this crisis to an end. It means continuing to provide healthcare coverage for those who are laid off or furloughed or lost employer coverage.

I recently introduced a bill with my friend Senator MCSALLY from Arizona to provide some degree of certainty for folks who found themselves without a job or health coverage through no fault of their own. It is called the Continuous Health Coverage for Workers Act, which would provide premium assistance for COBRA coverage during the rest of the year. As the coronavirus has wreaked havoc on our job market, it has filled countless Texans' lives with uncertainty. By passing this legislation as part of the next relief bill, we can ensure that those who previously maintained their health coverage through their employer can continue to do so through the end of the year.

Let me just say in conclusion that COVID-19 is not a partisan issue. It hasn't been up until this point. Unfortunately, the wheels came off, at least for the time being. We need to put those wheels back on the car. We are all on the same team fighting a common enemy. I hope we can rediscover the sense of bipartisanship and common purpose that helped us pass four bills up through and including March.

During August, I was able to spend time speaking with countless of my constituents about the bills we had passed and discussing what more was needed. In addition to hearing from the healthcare workers and providers who had been on the frontlines, I also joined students and teachers for socially

distanced conversations about the challenges that had been brought on by the start of the new school year. I held a video call with restaurant owners about the ongoing impact of the pandemic on their businesses. On telephone townhalls, I heard from constituents about their struggles to make ends meet after they lost their jobs and then lost the extra \$600 a week in Federal unemployment benefits, which lapsed because our colleagues wouldn't allow us to take up and consider, at some level, a continuation of those enhanced benefits.

As our Democratic colleagues have continued to play games, these are the folks who have been hurt, and I am sure there are similar situations in each of their States. For these Texans whom I have described, COVID-19 isn't about political points or sound bites—it is about their health, their families' safety, and their livelihoods.

While it seems like some have yielded to the temptation of using this pandemic for political gain, I am committed to continuing to work with all of our colleagues who are willing to ensure that we don't lose any of the ground we have gained in the war against COVID-19. We are literally up against the clock, and enough time has been wasted on name-calling, finger-pointing, and political posturing. It is time for the games to end so that we can finally provide our constituents, including our frontline heroes, with the resources they need in order to sustain and win this fight.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:01 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. KENNEDY).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON BLUMENFELD NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired on the Blumenfeld nomination.

The question is, Shall the Senate advise and consent to the Blumenfeld nomination?

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.